

Scarlet Paintbrush

Castilleja miniata



Large numbers of Scarlet Paintbrush often join the blue flowers of Penstemons to make spectacular floral displays in the meadows of Cedar Breaks in mid-summer. The bright red color of Paintbrush “flowers” is actually not from petals but from specialized leaves called bracts that surround the obscure, light yellow-green flowers inside. The red bracts do a good job of attracting butterflies and other pollinators to seek the nectar reward at the base of the tubular flowers.

Paintbrush species are known as hemi-parasites. While the plant’s leaves and stems contain chlorophyll and photosynthesize, their roots also can graft themselves to those of their neighbors and steal nutrients.